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ABSTRACT

The Philadelphia experience very strongly indicates that at least in Philadelphia, and very probably in most large cities in the northeastern U.S., several factors--notably the geographic separation of the races within the city and the existence of a sizable non-public school system (Usually (Usually parochial)--preclude the effective desegregation of the public schools without large scale busing of the pupils or without some kind of mixing of white suburban populations with black central city populations. Thus, those who espouse the use of desegregation tools such as changing feeder areas, pairing adjacent schools, and offering voluntary magnet programs at particular locations to achieve racial balance in the public schools of such cities may well be deluding themselves. As of mid-February 1975, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission is attempting to develop a desegregation plan for the Philadelphia schools. At the same time, the school district staff committee is also preparing a plan which will contain several elements from previous plans as well as the 'Academy' concept. The situation at the present time represents a significant departure in that this is the first time that the Commission has been ordered to prepare a plan. Previously, the Commission's role has been simply to review the plans prepared by the scho l district. (Author/JM)

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION,

THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIENCE

Presented at the
1975 Annual meeting of the
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HISTORY OF DESEGREGATION PLANNING IN PHILADELPHIA

In late 1967, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in a case involving the Chester, Pennsylvania School District, ruled that education offered in racially imbalanced public schools is discriminatory - whether brought about intentionally or not. Shortly after this ruling was handed down, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ordered seventeen school districts throughout the state to prepare and submit desegregation plans by June 30, 1968. Philadelphia, as the largest of these districts and the one confronted with the most complex problems, requested a series of extensions and finally submitted a plan to the Commission in July of 1969.

After lengthy review and a series of staff level meetings between the school district and the Commission, the plan was rejected in March of 1970. In October of that year, the Human Relations Commission lodged a complaint asserting that the School District of Philadelphia was in violation of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1966. In March of 1971, the Human Relations Commission held hearings in Philadelphia on this complaint. Following these hearings in June 1971, the Commission found the school district in violation of the Act and issued an order that the school district "develop and submit to the Commission for its approval, a plan and timetable for implementation thereof that will eliminate racial imbalance (as defined by the Final Order) in its schools." The school district immediately appealed the Commission's order in Commonwealth Court, and one year later in August 1972, the Court upheld the Commission's adjudication in all respects. The Commission thereupon entered its amended final order in September 1972 which required the school district to develop and submit to the Commission by January 2, 1973 a plan and timetable for implementation to eliminate racial imbalance in its schools. In December of 1972, when it became apparent

that a viable plan could not be developed by the January 1973 deadline, the school district requested an extension of time from the Commission and was given until April 1973 to submit its plan.

In March of 1973, school district staff submitted a proposed desegregation plan for review by the Board of Education. The major elements of the proposed plan included: physical desegregation within existing school district boundaries, programmatic desegregation, and the formation of a Metropolitan School District. After reviewing the proposed plan, the Board rejected it because it was too costly and would meet with citizen opposition. The Board, therefore, informed the Commission that it had no viable plan to submit by the April 1973 deadline.

In November of 1973, the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania ordered the School District of Philadelphia to submit a plan and timetable for implementation to the Human Relations Commission by February 15, 1974.

The Board and the Superintendent immediately appointed a staff committee, chaired by a Board member, to develop the plan as well as a broad-based Citizen's Committee to advise and work with the staff committee. The committee was charged with developing a viable plan which would contain at least three major elements: physical desegregation, programmatic desegregation, and regionalization. The plan was to accomplish the desegregation of all 280 Philadelphia public schools over a three year period and was to be completed in time for review by the School Board prior to submission to the Commission on February 15.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS AFFECTING DESEGREGATION PLANNING IN PHILADELPHIA

The School District of Philadelphia is coextensive with the City and County of Philadelphia. Philadelphia is the central city of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-New Jersey SMSA, an eight county area comprised of five Pennsylvania counties and three New Jersey counties.

Like most large cities in the north, Philadelphia has a sizable Negro population (34% of the total in 1970). This is in contrast to 17.2 percent for the SMSA as a whole. Moreover, the 654,000 Negroes in Philadelphia represent 77 percent of the Negro population in the entire SMSA, while Philadelphia's total population of approximately two million, represents only 40 percent of the entire SMSA.

It is also important to note that Philadelphia's black population is highly concentrated in several sections of the city. These concentrations grew up over a period of years during which Philadelphia received a substantial number of immigrants from the South (nearly 175,000 between 1940 and 1970) and have been reinforced by a high rate of natural increase in recent years.

These Negro residential areas expanded outward from their core over the years to the extent that, at present, most of west Philadelphia, all of north central Philadelphia, much of northwest Philadelphia, and parts of south Philadelphia are predominantly black. Conversely, the white population is overwhelmingly in the majority in northeast Philadelphia, the Roxborough section of the northwest, and in parts of south Philadelphia. (See Figure 1.)

The impact of this geographic separation of the races is, of course, quite pronounced in terms of the racial composition of enrollments in Philadelphia's public schools. Overall enrollment in the Philadelphia public schools is 61.3% black, 4.2% Spanish Surnamed, and 34.1% white.

The public schools located in the black residential areas have enrollments that are heavily, if not totally black, and the schools in the white residential areas have enrollments that are heavily, if not totally white. This situation is exacerbated by the existence of a well established and extensive non-public school system operated by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

FIGURE I

DISTRIBUTION OF PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS BY RACE, 1973-74

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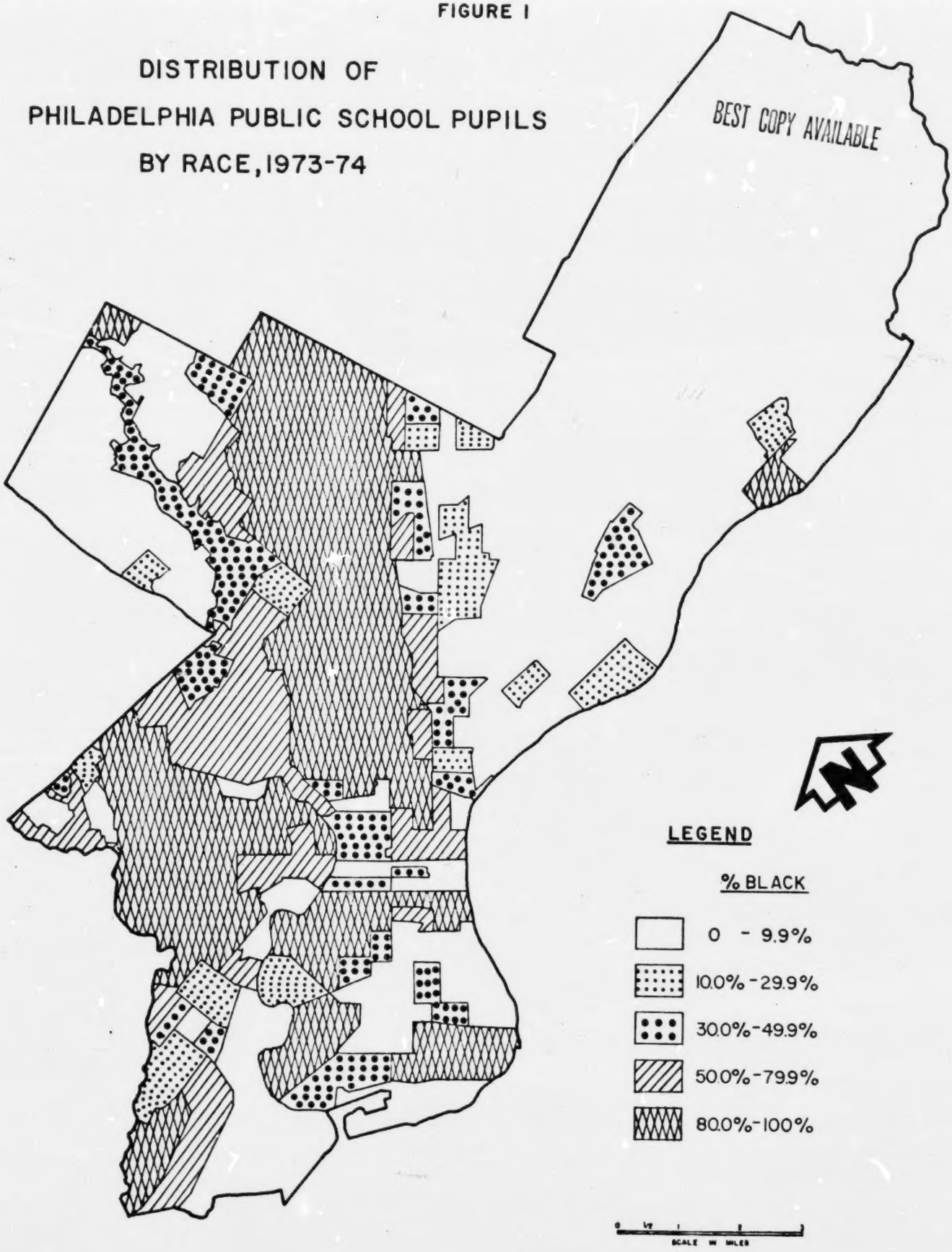


This system, which has been in operation since the early nineteenth century, serves nearly one-third of the school aged children in the city and has an enrollment which is around 90 percent white. The effect of this system is most pronounced in the zone of transition between primarily black and white residential areas. In these zones the total population is often racially balanced with whites and blacks living in close proximity to each other. School enrollments in these areas, however, often do not reflect the racial composition of the total population since the majority of the black children attend the local public school while the white children attend a nearby parish school.

As previously noted, one of the basic constraints is the geographic distribution of black and white pupils over the city. Of the approximately 92,000 white pupils in the system, nearly 58,000 are concentrated in the northeastern part of the city - north and east of a line following the Reading and Penn Central Railroad tracks, east of Broad Street and north of Westmoreland Street. Four other pockets of white pupils - none containing even 10,000 pupils - are located in eastern Philadelphia in the Kensington-Richmond area, between the Delaware River and Frankford Avenue; in south Philadelphia, east of Broad and south of Mifflin Street; in southwest Philadelphia, below 58th Street and west of the Schuylkill River; and in northwest Philadelphia, south and west of the Wissahickon Creek. (See Figure 2.)

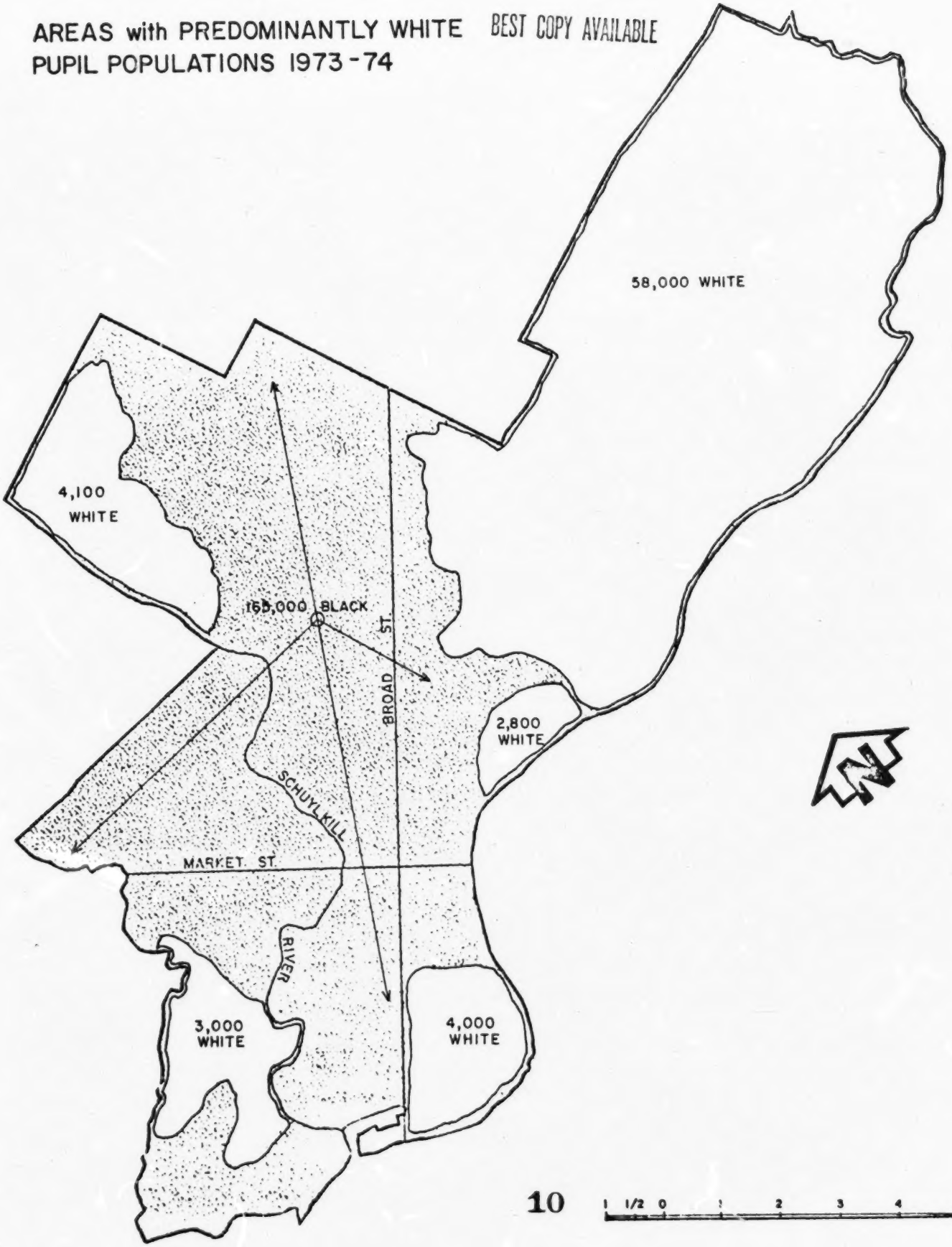
Thus, apart from the 58,000 pupils in northeastern Philadelphia - which is geographically isolated from the rest of the city - there are 34,000 white pupils in the rest of the city to balance against the 165,000 Negro pupils in the system. This distribution reduces the effectiveness of traditional desegregation tools such as changing feeder area boundaries, pairing nearby schools with enrollments of different races, and closing schools in order to redistribute their pupils among nearby schools whose pupils are of a different race.

Under the Human Relations Commission's final order, a desegregated or racially balanced school would be one in which the percent Negro enrollment was no more than 30 percent greater than the citywide average for all schools at that level nor less than 30 percent below the citywide average for all schools at that level. Thus, the acceptable ranges for Philadelphia schools are:

elementary schools	42.4 to 78.8% black
middle and junior high schools	46.6 to 86.6% black
senior high schools	42.7 to 79.3% black
area voc/tech schools	46.9 to 87.1% black

Under these guidelines, 41 or (14%) of Philadelphia's schools were considered to be desegregated in 1972-73, and 13 percent of the pupils were attending desegregated schools. The remaining 239 schools in the district were considered segregated by the Commission's standards. (See Appendix Table 1.)

FIGURE 2


AREAS with PREDOMINANTLY WHITE
PUPIL POPULATIONS 1973-74
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58,000 WHITE
4,100
WHITE
155,000 BLACK
BROAD ST.
2,800
WHITE
SCHUYLKILL
MARKET ST
RIVER
3,000
WHITE
4,000
WHITE
N
1 1/2 0 1 2 3 4 5

APPROACHES TO DESEGREGATION PLANNING

The committee decided to test all possible desegregation techniques that had been used by other districts and/or suggested or recommended as effective tools by the Federal or State Human Relations Commissions.

The most commonly used techniques for desegregating schools include: school pairing, central schools, revising school feeder or attendance areas, magnet schools, education complexes, and education parks.

School Pairing

School desegregation by pairing is achieved when the attendance areas of two or more nearby schools are merged so that each school serves different grade levels for a new, larger attendance area. For example, the attendance zones of a predominantly white and predominantly Negro school, each serving grades 1-6 (or K-6), would be merged so that all children in grades 1-3 in the new attendance area would attend one school, and all children in grades 4-6 in the new attendance area would attend the other school. Most appropriate for desegregating schools in small cities, pairing has been used successfully in such communities as Princeton, N.J., Greenburgh, N.Y., and Coatesville, Pa.

Central Schools

A technique for desegregating schools used by some communities has been the conversion of one or more schools into central facilities for a single grade to serve a large area formerly served by several individual schools. For example, a predominantly Negro elementary school could be converted into a school for all sixth grade children in one area. The remaining elementary schools then, instead of serving six grades would serve only five but would cover larger geographic areas. This technique is most effective in cities - or parts of cities - in which, because of residential patterns, existing small neighborhood schools can be used to achieve desegregation. This technique has been used in several small cities around the country, including Englewood, N.J., Berkeley, Calif., and Teaneck, N.J.

School Closing

Where space permits, the closing of a segregated school and assigning its pupils to other schools in the area is a technique similar to the establishment of central schools. Depending on its age, condition, and other factors the 'closed' school may be utilized for other purposes.

Revising School Feeder or Attendance Areas

In contiguous areas which are predominantly white and predominantly black and are served by two separate schools, it is sometimes possible to desegregate one or both schools by changing the boundaries of the school's service areas. This technique is particularly applicable for schools adjacent to the line between predominantly black and predominantly white residential areas.

Magnet Schools (or Supplementary Centers)

Schools offering special curricula can often attract children from a wide geographical area. Magnet schools may be created which offer special educational programs on a full time basis for children from all over the district. Supplementary centers may also be created to offer a special science or humanities program for children from several nearby schools - on a part time basis. This technique can achieve at least partial desegregation even in large cities with large Negro populations. Cleveland, Ohio and Los Angeles, Calif. have both proposed such schools.

Education Complexes

This technique groups a number of nearby schools into a 'complex' with each school developing a specialty in some subject area. All resources and facilities for that curriculum area would then be concentrated in one building which would serve all children in the complex. This approach is most applicable to cities or areas within cities where racially different neighborhoods adjoin each other.

Education Parks

This technique creates clusters of new school facilities (primary, intermediate, and upper) large enough to serve thousands of children on a single site. It is contended that the combined resources of an education park afford greater opportunity for effective administration, and also provides for innovations and facilities (such as laboratories and computer-assisted teaching) which are too costly for individual small schools. Several large cities have been considering the development of educational parks including New York, N.Y., Pittsburgh, Pa., St. Paul, Minn., and Syracuse, N.Y.

PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS

All of the above techniques have been tested or applied in school districts around the country. With few exceptions, however, these desegregation tools have been used by small school districts and communities, and their application has affected only a few schools. When attempting to apply these techniques to a system as large and complex as Philadelphia, school district staff were confronted with numerous problems and unforeseen difficulties.

In terms of their application to the specific conditions that exist in Philadelphia, these standard techniques vary widely - from having little or no utility at all to being potentially highly effective.

School district staff began to develop the physical desegregation component of the plan by examining the possibility of changing school feeder area boundaries to achieve desegregation. Given the racial composition of local areas within the city and the limited extent of most elementary school feeder areas, it soon became apparent that this technique could be applied in only a handful of situations and would not affect more than a few hundred pupils.

The technique of school pairing had been explored in the preparation of several earlier plans and its effectiveness was found to be determined by whether or not it was coupled with busing of pupils. When applied to situations involving two adjacent schools - one white and one black - with the restriction that all pupils in the combined feeder area of the paired schools must walk to their assignment, it was found that only two schools in the entire city could be desegregated by this technique. The net effect of this pairing would be to provide a desegregated educational experience for 1,600 pupils. Limiting the pairing concept to schools within walking distance of all parts of their feeder area is, however, consistent with a policy established by the Board of Education at its meeting of October 20, 1965. At that time the Board stated "Large scale exchange of white and Negro pupils by reverse busing is not regarded as a suitable way of obtaining meaningful integration, and the use of school buses for this purpose is not recommended."

The creation of central schools, to serve a single grade, is a device the School District of Philadelphia has employed at the high school level for a number of years. Off site centers near several seriously overcrowded high schools had been established as early as 1968. The creation of these centers permitted the removal of one grade (usually the entry level grade) from the main building, and thereby relieved the overcrowding that had previously existed. These centers did not affect the racial balance in the high schools to which they were connected, however, since the racial mix in the entry level grade was usually the same as in the entire high school organization. The creation of such single grade centers at the elementary school level was also explored by the Committee, and found to be of only limited value as a desegregation tool in Philadelphia. The major drawbacks to employing this technique in Philadelphia are the lack of contiguous black and white schools, variations in the

size, age and condition of the facilities, and strong community commitment to neighborhood schools. Serious reservations were also expressed by teachers, parents, and administrators regarding the desirability of "bouncing a child around" to as many as three separate schools in three consecutive years.

The technique of closing segregated schools that are underutilized or are old, obsolete facilities, and redistributing the pupils over a number of nearby schools to achieve racial balance also has limited applicability in Philadelphia - unless it is coupled with busing. The Committee examined the possibility of closing ten old (pre-1906) buildings which are presently underutilized and whose enrollments are racially imbalanced, and redistributing their pupils over other schools which could absorb these pupils and whose enrollments are predominantly of another race. In only one case was it possible to close such a facility and send its pupils to a nearby school which they could attend without being bused. The other nine closings would require busing of up to nine miles one way each day.

The technique of creating magnet schools that provide special curricula and facilities for children with a common interest has been employed for a number of years. The school district presently has six 'magnet high schools' in operation, and since 1970 all new high schools automatically open with a voluntary magnet component. The size of the magnet enrollment varies depending on the particular program and the location of the school. However, in no case has the magnet component been a decisive factor in desegregating the high school in which it is offered. Of the six magnet high schools, four are presently segregated by Human Relations Commission standards. Three are more than 90 percent black and one is more than 95 percent white. The two desegregated magnet high schools both serve extensive geographic areas that have racially mixed populations in

addition to the magnet pupils, so that the total enrollment is racially balanced. In Philadelphia, experience indicates that voluntary participation in magnet programs does not constitute an effective desegregation tool.

As early as 1966 the school district was exploring the feasibility of developing an educational park in the city. A prominent Philadelphia architectural firm was engaged to identify possible sites and to plan the park. The consultants identified several potential park sites along Broad Street, the main north-south artery through the city, and school district staff subsequently identified an additional site in west-central Philadelphia. Initial planning called for each park to contain at least one high school, a middle school, and a lower school. The total pupil population to be served by each park would range from 5,600 to 8,200 children. In the years immediately following the initial study, the school district was faced with a series of recurring financial crises and the failure of a bond issue designed to provide funds for the building program. As a result the school district was unable to acquire large enough sites in appropriate locations to implement the park concept. The major difficulties in developing education parks in cities like Philadelphia include; assembling large enough sites for such facilities, purchasing such large quantities of land at current prices, and getting approval from the necessary city agencies to use such land for tax exempt purposes. Even if these logistical problems could be overcome, serious administrative problems would have to be resolved before as many as 8,200 children ranging in age from 5 to over 18 years, could be transported to and concentrated on one site on a daily basis.

The committee's review of the traditional desegregation techniques led to the conclusion that only a limited amount of desegregation could be accomplished by their application within the confines of the school district as it presently exists.

These findings were presented to the Board and it was the Board's judgment that the application of the pairing concept, where the schools to be paired were within two miles of each other, and the continued use of busing to relieve overcrowding were the only two viable physical desegregation tools that could effectively desegregate any number of schools and pupils. The Board also selected several programmatic desegregation techniques which it felt could be utilized to achieve some desegregation. Among these were; the creation of a number of intensive learning centers - modeled after the existing ILC established in 1968 - which would draw pupils from nearby schools with race as a selection criterion; and the expansion of alternative programs at the high school level - each center would offer special studies toward a particular skill or career area such as health careers, public service careers, careers in arts, or commercial and mercantile careers.

Review of the application of these techniques indicated, however, that in the aggregate they would provide a desegregated educational experience for at most an additional 15,000 pupils over the next three years.

The Board, therefore, recommended the establishment of a regional or metropolitan school district - to include at least 12 or 13 adjacent suburban school districts which have a total of 98,000 pupils, 95% of which are white. Thus, the 93,000 white pupils in the suburban ring coupled with the 91,000 white pupils in Philadelphia would provide enough white pupils to balance against the 172,000 Negro pupils in the district.

Precedent for combining pupils from an inner city district with surrounding suburban districts has been established in Illinois, North Carolina, Michigan, and Virginia. The situation of Philadelphia is essentially the same as that described by the court in Bradley v Milliken where Judge Roth cited the increasing concentration of blacks in Detroit, the central city,

particularly in the public school population, and noted that if present trends continue, the public school population would be virtually 100 percent black by the early 1990's.[3/] This pattern is not confined to the Detroit area but is common to all large metropolitan areas, including Philadelphia. Tables 1 and 2 show the increasing proportion of blacks, in both the total population and the public school population, in the five largest metropolitan areas over the last several decades.

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Table 1. Blacks as Percent of Total Population, Five Largest SMA's, 1950-1970

Urbanized Area	Total Urbanized Area			Central City or Cities			Suburban Ring		
	1970	1960	1950	1970	1960	1950	1970	1960	1950
New York	14.9%	10.9%	8.1%	22.6%	14.9%	9.7%	5.9%	4.5%	3.9%
Los Angeles	9.2	7.1	5.4	16.5	12.2	7.9	4.8	3.2	2.3
Chicago	19.6	16.1	11.6	32.8	23.0	13.9	3.4	3.0	2.9
Philadelphia	19.8	17.3	14.8	33.6	26.4	18.1	6.9	6.1	6.7
Detroit	19.0	15.6	12.8	43.6	28.9	16.2	3.7	3.8	5.8
5 Area Average	16.5	13.4	10.5	29.8	21.1	13.2	4.9	4.1	4.3

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970. PC(1)-B, Table 23; Census of Population: 1960, PC(1)-B, Table 21; Census of Population: 1950, Vol.II, Table 34.

Table 2. Blacks as Percent of Total Public Elementary School Population, 1960 & 1970 [a/]

Urbanized Area	Total Urbanized Area		Central City or Cities		Suburban Ring	
	1970	1960	1970	1960	1970	1960
New York	22.7%	16.5%	40.0%	26.1%	5.5%	6.1%
Los Angeles	12.2	10.3	23.6	19.1	6.8	5.2
Chicago	30.0	27.5	54.8	42.6	4.8	4.6
Philadelphia	31.5	29.6	61.1	50.1	10.5	10.0
Detroit	23.4	22.2	64.3	45.8	4.5	5.6
5 Area Average	24.0	21.2	41.6	36.7	6.4	6.3

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1960, PC(1)-C, Tables 73 and 77; Census of Population: 1970, PC(1)-C, Tables 83 and 91.

a/ Data for 1960 refer to nonwhites; for 1970, to blacks.

Note: Tables 1 and 2 modified from Hermalin, A.I. and Farley, R. "The Potential for Residential Integration in Cities and Suburbs: Implications for the Busing Controversy," American Sociological Review 1973, Vol. 38 (October): 595-610.

The data clearly show the concentration of blacks in the central cities of the large urban areas, and their under-representation in the suburban portions of these areas. In the Philadelphia urbanized area, for example, 31.5 percent of all elementary school pupils were black in 1970 - while only 10.5 percent of the elementary school pupils in the suburban ring were black. Conversely, in 1970, 61.1 percent of the elementary pupils in Philadelphia - the central city - were black. The data suggest that in many metropolitan areas, including Philadelphia, combining the pupil populations of the suburban ring and the central city would result in a desegregated pupil population throughout the area as a whole. Both geographic and political realities, however, preclude the application of this technique in many areas.

In the Philadelphia area, while the suburban area around the city contains enough white pupils to balance the large number of black pupils in the city, the geography of the area prevents effective mixing of the pupils without extensive busing. The northeastern part of the city which contains over 60 percent of the white pupils in the system, borders on all white suburban districts in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Moreover, the eastern part of the city adjoins the Delaware River which in turn borders on the State of New Jersey.

Only west Philadelphia, which contains nearly 50 percent of the black pupils in the system, could effectively exchange pupils with adjoining suburban districts and achieve a meaningful degree of desegregation. Thus, even if a regional or metropolitan plan were deemed legally acceptable, the implementation of such a plan would still require extensive busing of pupils. These constraints, coupled with the Supreme Court decision in the summer of 1974 in the Detroit, Michigan case, suggest that a regional or metropolitan plan may not be a viable alternative in Philadelphia.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

As required by the order of the Court, the school district submitted its desegregation plan to the Human Relations Commission on February 15, 1974.

The plan contained three major elements; Physical Desegregation within the school district itself, Creation of a Metropolitan School District, and Programmatic Desegregation. Under the general heading of Physical Desegregation a number of specific procedures were identified, including:

Using the busing to relieve overcrowding program to further desegregation. In 1973-74 the school district was busing approximately 6,300 pupils from about 30 schools in order to relieve overcrowding. The schools to which these pupils were bused were selected as 'receiving schools' primarily on the basis of available space to house the bused-in pupils and proximity to the sending school. At that time only one of the 30 receiving schools was desegregated due to the presence of the bused-in pupils. The plan, therefore, recommended the reassignment of the bused pupils to other 'receiving schools' where their presence would bring about a greater degree of racial balance. The proposed changes would have desegregated seven schools and around 2,000 pupils.

Creation of Intensive Learning Type Centers.

For several years the school district has operated an Intensive Learning Center in a converted building in the lower northeast section of the city. The ILC has been extremely successful and its concepts and procedures - including team teaching in an open space setting, individualized instruction, and the bringing together of children from an area larger than that served by an individual school - have been widely praised throughout the system. The plan proposed the establishment of five additional ILC's, each to serve about 350 pupils. The pupils would be drawn on a voluntary

basis with race as a selection criterion from at least two different schools - one with a predominantly white enrollment and one with a predominantly black enrollment. This proposal would have resulted in the creation of five desegregated facilities and the desegregation of approximately 1,750 pupils.

Expansion of high school level alternative programs.

Since the late 1960's the school district has been operating an alternative school, the Parkway Program, which offers pupils a less structured learning environment than the traditional high school and for which pupils are selected by lottery with race as a selection criterion. The plan proposed the establishment of a number of new Parkway type units, each to serve about 200 pupils, which would draw pupils from all over the city with admission controlled for race. This procedure would have desegregated 3,000 pupils between 1974-75 and 1976-77.

Pairing of schools to achieve desegregation.

The plan proposed the pairing of adjacent schools (located within two miles of each other) with racially different enrollments by making one school serve the lower grades for all pupils in the combined area and the other serve the higher grades. While no specific examples of where this procedure would be feasible were cited, the plan proposed that any such situations which could result in achieving racial balance within the Commission's guidelines be identified for pairing.

Use of the Capital Program to foster desegregation.

On January 29, 1975 the Board of Education adopted the following resolution: "That the School District's Capital Program be revised to foster desegregation in the replacement of non-fire resistant schools and in the construction of new and additional school facilities." In keeping

with this resolution the plan specified that, whenever possible, new schools and replacements for existing schools should be constructed in areas that will draw students of all races to the new facility.

Under the heading, creation of a Metropolitan School District, it was proposed that the thirteen individual school districts which adjoin Philadelphia be merged with Philadelphia into one Metropolitan School District. The thirteen suburban districts had a total enrollment of 98,500 pupils of which 95 percent were white. Establishment of the Metropolitan District would create a new unit with a total enrollment of around 370,000 pupils of which 54 percent would be white and 46 percent black. It was acknowledged, however, that existing political and legal constraints would probably preclude the adoption of this element.

Under the general heading of Programmatic Desegregation, a variety of procedures were proposed to foster desegregation. The programmatic element of the plan covered the areas of curriculum programs, new community programs, staff development programs, and student to student activities all of which contribute to the development of a desegregated learning environment.

The Human Relations Commission reviewed the plan and at its meeting of February 25, 1974 voted to disapprove the plan. The Commission then petitioned Commonwealth Court to reaffirm its order of November 1973 and requested "the fashioning of appropriate relief which will bring the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia into compliance with said order of the Commonwealth Court...". The Court then appointed an expert, Dr. David Kurtzman - a former Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh and former Pennsylvania Secretary of Education - to formulate a desegregation plan for the school district which would comply with the order of the Court. Dr. Kurtzman was to present the plan to the Court by September 1, 1974.

Over the summer of 1974, Dr. Kurtzman met with School District and Human Relations Commission staff on several occasions and collected data and information that was required to develop his plan.

On September 1, 1974, Dr. Kurtzman presented his plan to Commonwealth Court and transmitted copies to the School District and the Commission. The major elements of the 'Kurtzman Plan' included administrative reorganization of the school system into fifteen Educational Service Areas (ESA's) - instead of the present eight administrative districts - and the reorganization of all schools, in terms of grade span, into either K-4, 5-8, or 9-12 units. (See Figure 3.) Dr. Kurtzman proposed that pupils residing within an individual ESA would be reassigned so that they could walk to a racially balanced school of their grade span.

The 'Kurtzman Plan' had a number of serious weaknesses which were immediately apparent to school district staff and knowledgable community people. Among the more serious was the fact that the fifteen ESA's created encompassed only about three-fourths of the city. Dr. Kurtzman's criteria for delineating ESA's was essentially a racial mix of pupils within a geographic area which fell between 42 and 78 percent black. While it was possible to create such areal units in some parts of the city, Northeast Philadelphia - which is entirely white - and West Philadelphia - which is almost entirely black - were excluded from the plan because they did not conform to this requirement.

Secondly, while the concept of reassigning pupils so that they could attend racially balanced schools of their grade span without traveling more than a mile and one-half from home was a primary goal of the plan, such reassignment simply could not be accomplished in Philadelphia. Dr. Kurtzman attempted to test the concept in one area of the city and then proposed that

FIGURE 3

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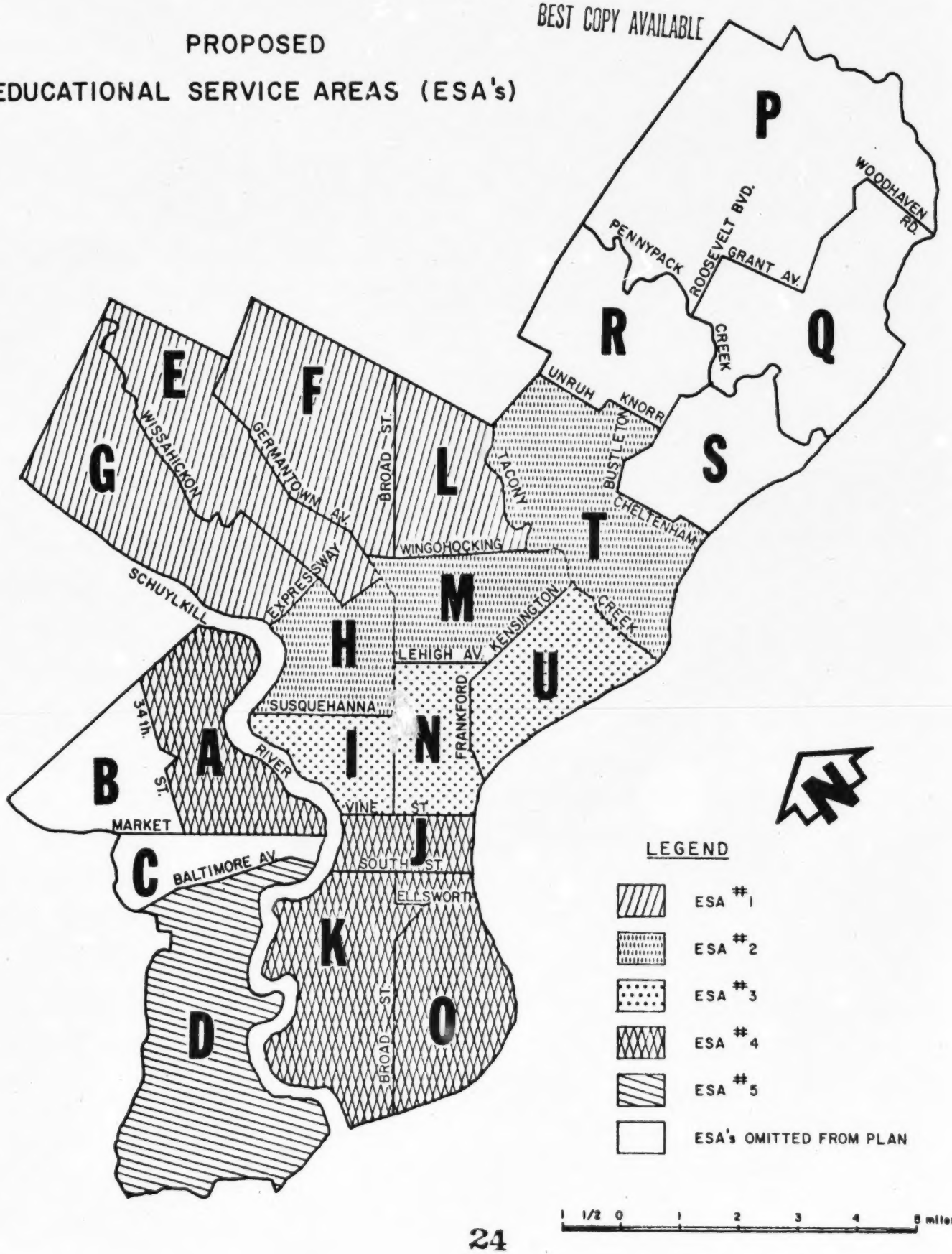
PROPOSED
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AREAS (ESA's)



the school district extend the procedure to other parts of the city using his test area as a model. The area that he chose was essentially the northwestern section of the city, extending from the city limits on the west and north, across Broad Street to the Tacony Creek on the east. This total area has perhaps greater internal potential for desegregation than any other section of the city in that it consists of a large black area surrounded on both sides by white areas. Moreover, except at the high school level, there is a surplus of space relative to the total number of pupils to be served which provides flexibility in pupil assignment and which allows kindergarten children to be housed in their neighborhood school - regardless of grade span. It was under these more or less optimum conditions that Dr. Kurtzman and his staff attempted to implement his proposals.

For purposes of analysis the entire area was divided into three sub-areas; the southern section, the central section, and the northeastern section. The first sub-area treated was the southern. This area presently contains four elementary schools, three of which are predominantly black and one of which is predominantly white. Dr. Kurtzman proposed that one of the existing elementary schools be converted to a 5-8 middle school with fifth through eighth graders from the other three schools assigned there and the first through fourth graders from the converted school assigned to the other elementaries. Kindergarten children in the area of the converted school would attend kindergarten there in rooms specially designed for them. However, one of the elementaries whose fifth through eighth graders were to attend the converted facility, is separated from that school by a creek and a park and, although school to school linear distances were approximately one

and one-half miles actual street or sidewalk distances were over three miles. One of the other elementaries is separated from the converted middle school facility by an extensive non-residential area and an expressway. Pupils from this school's area would have to walk over two miles to get to the middle school. School district staff measured travel distances in several other cases of suggested pupil reassignment and found them to involve travel substantially in excess of one and one-half miles. This information was offered in testimony to Commonwealth Court on September 1974, and after hearing testimony from both the Commission and school district staff, the Court decided not to order the school district to implement the 'Kurtzman Plan'.

After conferring with legal counsel for the school district and the Human Relations Commission on October 1, 1974, Judge Wilkinson ordered both parties to prepare independent plans for the desegregation of Philadelphia's public schools. The completed plans were to be submitted to the Court no later than January 31, 1975.

In late October and early November of 1974, School District and Human Relations Commission staff met to discuss specific data and informational needs. Each agency then began to develop new plans for submission to the Court.

The school district staff team was instructed by the Board to prepare two plans. One plan would contain the elements previously approved by the Board and would be essentially similar to the February 1974 plan, and the other would attempt to desegregate as many schools as possible to approximately a 50-50 racial mix. The latter plan would, of course, require extensive cross-busing of pupils throughout the city. Upon completion of the two plans, the Board would review them and make its determination as to which plan to submit to the Court.

In early November 1974 school district staff began to develop the second of these two plans. Several working sessions were held at which various schools with enrollments predominantly or exclusively of one race were selected for busing. Basically, the procedure consisted of identifying a white school and a black school with similar size enrollments and capacities, determining the number of pupils of one race that would have to be removed from each school and replaced by pupils of the other race to achieve an approximately 50 percent white and 50 percent black racial mix, estimating the distance between the schools and the appropriate travel route, and then matching the two schools. Since most all white schools are in the northeastern section of the city, this meant that pupils from the northeasternmost schools would have to be bused past a dozen or more white schools down to the black areas and black pupils bused by these same schools to the matching white school. This procedure is, of course, necessitated by the geographic distribution of black and white pupils within the city.

On November 18, however, the Pennsylvania State Senate passed legislation that prohibited any State commission, board, or agency from ordering the busing of school children to any school other than the one nearest to their home without the written permission of the child's parent. In light of this decision, both the school district and the Human Relations Commission suspended all work involving extensive busing of pupils pending a ruling on the impact of this legislation on the development of a feasible desegregation plan.

On return from a trip abroad in early December, Governor Shapp vetoed Senate Bill 1400. Following the Governor's action both the Human Relations Commission and the School District petitioned the Court for extensions of the January 31 deadline. The Human Relations Commission requested a four month

extension to enable them to engage a consultant to develop a plan to be submitted to the Court. The consultant selected by the Commission was Dr. Gordon Foster, of the University of Miami, at Coral Gables, Florida. Dr. Foster's background in desegregation planning included participation in the plans prepared for Detroit, Memphis, and Wilmington, Delaware. Judge Wilkinson granted both parties an extension until May 31, 1975 as requested by the Commission.

On January 9, 1975 the Board of Education held a special Board conference to deal with the issue of desegregating the Philadelphia public schools. In attendance at the conference were the Board, members of the staff committee, and representatives of various community groups and agencies, including the Urban Coalition, the Fellowship Commission, the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and the Home and School Council. At the conference one of the Board members presented an alternative desegregation proposal for consideration by the Board and the community representatives. Essentially, the proposal envisioned the creation of a number of centers, or academies, into which pupils from a group of black and white schools would be sent for one day a week. Under the plan, pupils would thus enjoy a desegregated educational experience one day a week and remain in their home or neighborhood schools the other four days. The proposal, as presented, represented little more than an outline which required further analysis and elaboration before the Board could react responsibly to it. A number of Board members and community representatives, however, felt that the concept had sufficient merit to warrant its development - at least on a pilot basis. Consequently, the Board directed the staff committee to test the concept by identifying a number of potential academies and the group of schools whose pupils would be mixed into each one. If, on the basis of this more detailed

analysis, the concept was found to be feasible, and assuming that obstacles such as the reassignment of local pupils from the existing schools designated as academies could be overcome, then the concept would be incorporated into the school district's plan to be submitted to the court.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As of the time of this writing - mid-February 1975 - the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, with the aid of its consultant, is attempting to develop a desegregation plan for the Philadelphia schools. At the same time, the school district staff committee is also preparing a plan which will contain several elements from previous plans as well as the 'Academy' concept for the Court's review. The Judge may then elect to order the implementation of one or the other plan, or he may select elements from each and combine them into a third plan.

In any event, the situation at the present time represents a significant departure from past practices in that this is the first time that the Commission has been ordered to prepare a plan. Previously, the Commission's role has been simply to review the plans prepared by the school district. If the Commission deemed a plan unsatisfactory, it simply requested the Court to order the school district to comply with the Commission's order to desegregate. The inadequacy of this procedure has been amply demonstrated over the past six years. It has long been the contention of the school district staff that, to all practical purposes, it is not possible to develop a <u>feasible</u> desegregation plan for Philadelphia within the guidelines laid down by the Commission. School district staff are, therefore, anxiously awaiting the outcome of the Commission's attempt to develop its own plan within the framework of its own guidelines which stress the application of conventional desegregation techniques.

The Philadelphia experience very strongly indicates that at least in Philadelphia, and very probably in most large cities in the northeastern

United States, several factors - notably the geographic separation of the races within the city and the existence of a sizable non-public school system (usually parochial) - preclude the effective desegregation of the public schools without large scale busing of the pupils or without some kind of mixing of white suburban populations with black central city populations. Thus, those who espouse the use of desegregation tools such as changing feeder areas, pairing adjacent schools, and offering voluntary magnet programs at particular locations to achieve racial balance in the public schools of such cities may well be deluding themselves.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1. RACIALLY IMBALANCED SCHOOLS, BY LEVEL AND BY DISTRICT, 1972-73

School Level	Districts								Racially Imbalanced	Total Schools	Acceptable Value PHRC Ranges
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
SHS	3	2	-	2	-	5	1	3	16	21	79.3 to 42.7 %
AVT	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	4	4	87.1 to 46.9
JHS/MS	6	3	3	6	5	4	1	5	33	37	86.6 to 46.6
ELEM.	26	23	15	23	19	22	24	23	175	200	78.8 to 42.4
SPC. CTRS.	2	1	2	1	-	-	3	2	11	18	Not Specified
Total	37	29	21	33	25	32	29	33	239	280	80.6 to 43.4

Administrative & Survey Research Services
February 20, 1975
WPH/sw

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Footnotes

1/ Schools Can Be Desegregated, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C., June 1967

2/ Minutes of the Board of Public Education, Philadelphia, Pa., 1965

3/ Bradley v Milliken, Civ. Action 35257 (E.D. Mich., 1971)